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# Missouri Department of Natural Resources Ombudsman Program

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Ombudsman Fact Sheet

4/2006

Seven ombudsmen from the Department of Natural Resources have visited about 1,000 citizens, community officials and businesses in 99 Missouri counties and the city of St. Louis since September 2005.

The ombudsmen have met with city and county officials, local health departments, local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development agencies, volunteer fire departments, local businesses and others. Common questions have been related to status of permits, status of grants or loans, application processes for grants or loans, opportunities for water and wastewater operators' training; possibility of training city clerks to properly fill out reports for water supply and wastewater treatment permits; derelict building demolition requirements; open burning requirements; complaints about illegal solid waste dumping; asbestos removal requirements; and concerns with the quality of drinking water. Because of the face-to-face communication involved, the ombudsmen were able to provide answers within hours, rather than days or weeks.

The ombudsmen also participated with the Department of Natural Resources director and the department's chief ombudsman in a series of public meetings around the state. Presentations have been made to the Hazardous Waste Management Commission and to the Small Business Compliance Advisory Board.

Recently, as part of the first phase of a new compliance assistance initiative, the Department of Natural Resources visited 188 land disturbance sites, newly permitted air sources, drinking water facilities, limestone quarries and hazardous waste generators that receive permits, licenses, certifications and registrations from the agency. Department of Natural Resources' inspectors go over the permit requirements with the facility operator, view operations and provide feedback, guidance documents and other helpful information to the permit holder. Department staff also provide training about required sampling, record keeping, operations and maintenance if necessary. Areas where the facility has good performance as well as areas of concern are discussed.

Initial assistance visits became standard practice for the department in January 2006. The department surveyed the facilities that participated and received a 90 percent response. On a scale of 1 (poor) and 10 (excellent), the department's average score was 9.1. Answers indicated a general appreciation for the department's new initiative in helping permit holders comply with federal and state environmental regulations. For more information on the Department of Natural Resources' ombudsman program and the compliance assistance initiative, visit [www.dnr.mo.gov/](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/) or call 1-800-361-4827.





# MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## Ombudsman Program

### Kansas City

**Bowman, Judy**  
**Kansas City Regional Office**  
500 NE Colbern Rd  
Lee's Summit, MO 64086-4710  
(816) 622-7000  
FAX: (816) 622-7044  
Cell Phone: (816) 565-1296

### Northeast

**Summers, Don**  
**Northeast Regional Office**  
1709 Prospect Dr.  
Macon, MO 63552-2602  
(660) 385-8000  
FAX: (660) 385-8090  
Cell Phone: (573) 291-3055

### St. Louis

**Alesandrini, Mike**  
**St. Louis Regional Office**  
7545 S. Lindbergh  
St. Louis, MO 63125  
(314) 416-2960  
FAX: (314) 416-2970  
Cell Phone: (314) 560-4703

### Central

**Froelker, Jim**  
**Division of Geology and Land Survey**  
111 Fairgrounds Rd., P. O. Box 250  
Rolla, MO 65402  
(573) 368-2100  
FAX: (573) 368-2111  
Cell Phone: (573) 619-1410

### Southwest

**Smith, Carrie**  
**Southwest Regional Office**  
2040 W. Woodland  
Springfield, MO 65807-5912  
(417) 891-4300  
FAX: (417) 891-4399  
Cell Phone: (573) 619-1409

**Woolery, Dave**  
**Southwest Regional Office**  
2040 W. Woodland  
Springfield, MO 65807-5912  
(417) 891-4300  
FAX: (417) 891-4399  
Cell Phone: (573) 619-1408

### Southeast

**Bostic, Jackson**  
**Southeast Regional Office**  
2155 North Westwood Boulevard  
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901  
(573) 840-9485  
FAX: (573) 840-9483  
Cell Phone: (573) 619-1407

